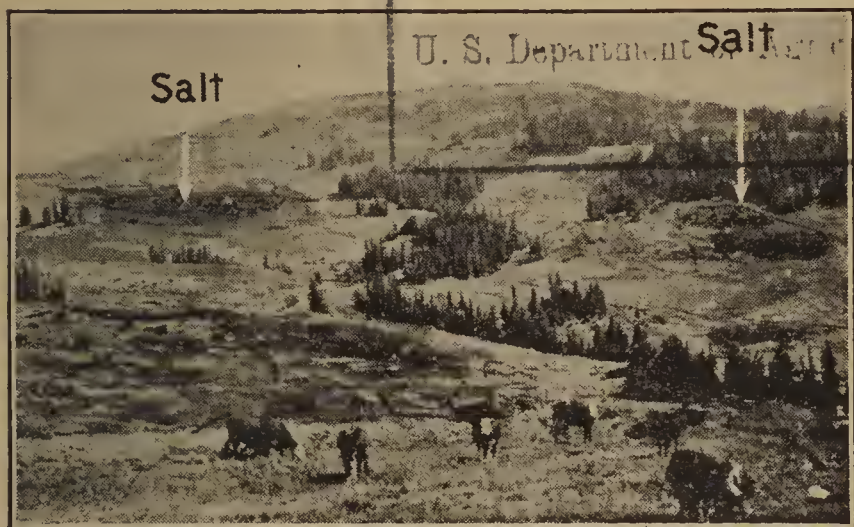


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SALTING THE CATTLE RANGE



Cattle crave salt. Place it where feed should be utilized



Salt should not be placed on favored areas, such as bottom lands, meadows, and areas about water

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST



SERVICE

PROPER SALTING PAYS

Placing the correct amount of salt at proper places at the right time on cattle range results in better distribution of the stock and more timely and uniform utilization of the forage.

Salt is essential to the health and development of livestock. With an adequate quantity of salt, grazing animals develop better than they would otherwise, are more contented, and are more easily handled.

Cattle crave salt and will travel long distances to get it, much as they will to get water. For this reason careful location of salt in the right quantities and in accordance with a definite time schedule can be used to lessen congregation of stock and overgrazing, to increase the use of portions of range normally lightly used, and to aid in getting proper local distribution of cattle so that the forage will be utilized to best advantage.

PLACE SALT WHERE FEED IS

Salt should be placed where feed is available, the amount of salt being adjusted to the quantity of usable feed accessible from each salting place. Experience has shown that a salting place for each 30 to 60 head of cattle is good practice. Salt must be put out on a new range as soon as the cattle are moved to it if any appreciable effect is to be obtained in locating them in their new surroundings. However, salt should not be placed on any part of the range before the feed on that part is ready for grazing, and should be promptly removed when the cattle are moved from the range, or when the feed becomes properly utilized.

SALTING TO SECURE DISTRIBUTION

To do the most good in getting proper distribution of cattle, salt should be placed away from spots or localities already overgrazed or those most likely to become so. It should be placed away from favored areas such as meadows, bottom lands, natural passes, areas about water, and roads and trails. It is essential to have the salt in a place readily reached by cattle where they can easily get their fill without danger of injury. A flat, shady place is preferable. Accessible ridges, knolls, and benches, the more level places on slopes, and small openings in browse and timber types are the main desirable locations. Lightly used areas in timber, patches of vegetation of low palatability, and accessible corners of the range where cattle seldom graze should be favored over areas normally fully utilized. The aim should be to obtain uniform use of the feed between salt and water over the entire range.

The basis for deciding on proper numbers of cattle on the range and on salting to obtain full use is the forage on the usable portions of the range. There is no object in placing salt on slopes too steep or too rocky for cattle to graze over. If salt is placed on inaccessible areas and the vegetation there is included in carrying capacity estimates, the usable range will be overgrazed, which will mean range damage, erosion, and unsatisfactory livestock production; and a cut in the number of cattle grazed will be necessary.

Studies of grazing in the Southwest show that for satisfactory management, cattle may be expected to graze out 2 or $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from water on level or undulating ranges, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles on rolling, and one-half to 1 mile on rough range. Salting cattle only at or near water causes unnecessary congestion and overgrazing near the water and waste of feed on outlying areas.

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SALT ALLOWANCE

A salt allowance of from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per head a month should be placed on the average range during the season when fresh feed is available, and from 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds per head a month for the remainder of the year. For the average yearlong range per cow, a total of about 20 pounds of salt is required.

In the early spring and during the summer rainy season, roads are apt to become impassable. Therefore, salt should be hauled during other seasons to the range and stored in camp cabins or covered boxes where it will be convenient for distribution to the salting places.

IMPROPER SALTING MEANS—

Excessive concentration of cattle around salt and water.

Overgrazing in the more favored and accessible parts of the range.

Unused feed on areas out from water, on slopes, and in less favored areas.

PROPER SALTING MEANS—

Salt grounds well distributed over the range.

Amount of salt adjusted to the usable feed accessible from each salt ground.

Salt on each part of the range only when the feed on that part should be used.

Satisfactory distribution of cattle over the range.

Relatively uniform utilization of feed over the entire range.

More cattle on the range as a whole.

Better condition and growth of the cattle.